

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method comprising:
2 in response to a first request on behalf of a requesting instance of a plurality of instances of
3 an application, providing
4 a criterion for identifying a set of instances of the plurality of instances to receive first
5 data and
6 a location of the first data; and
7 providing the first data to the requesting instance when
8 a second request is made on behalf of the requesting instance for the first data upon
9 determining that the requesting instance satisfies the criterion.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein
2 the providing the criterion and the location comprises:
3 providing the criterion and the location when
4 second data associated with the criterion and the location have been updated.

1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein
2 the providing the criterion and the location comprises:
3 providing the criterion and the location when
4 second data associated with the criterion and the location have been updated
5 since a time specified in the second request.

1 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 receiving a message indicating whether the first data was received.

1 5. The method of claim 4 further comprising:
2 providing the first data again upon request by the requesting instance when the message
3 indicates that an error occurred in receiving the first data.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein
2 the first data comprise configuration data for each of the set of instances of the application.

1 7. The method of claim 1 wherein
2 the first data comprise an announcement to be sent to each of the set of instances of the
3 application.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein
2 the first data comprise one of:
3 a first executable program for each of the set of instances of the application,
4 a second executable program to install a third executable program for each of the set
5 of instances of the application, and
6 a component of the application for each of the set of instances of the application.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein
2 an index file comprises the criterion and the location; and
3 the providing the criterion and the location comprises providing the index file.

1 10. The method of claim 1 wherein
2 an index file comprises the criterion and the location, and
3 the providing the criterion and the location comprises:
4 appending the criterion to a set of existing criteria in an index file, and
5 providing the index file.

1 11. A system comprising:
2 first providing means for providing
3 a criterion for identifying a set of instances of a plurality of instances of an application
4 to receive first data and
5 a location of the first data
6 in response to a first request on behalf of a requesting instance of the plurality of
7 instances of the application;
8 and
9 second providing means for providing the first data to the requesting instance when
10 a second request is made on behalf of the requesting instance for the first data upon
11 determining that the requesting instance satisfies the criterion.

1 12. The system of claim 11 further comprising:
2 receiving means for receiving a message indicating whether the first data was received.

1 13. The system of claim 12 further comprising:

2 third providing means for providing the first data again upon request by the requesting
3 instance when the message indicates that an error occurred in receiving the first data.

1 14. The system of claim 11 wherein
2 an index file comprises the criterion and the location; and
3 the first providing means provide the index file.

1 15. A system comprising:
2 a first providing module to provide
3 a criterion for identifying a set of instances of a plurality of instances of an application
4 to receive first data and
5 a location of the first data
6 in response to a first request on behalf of a requesting instance of the plurality of
7 instances of the application;
8 and
9 a second providing module to provide the first data to the requesting instance when
10 a second request is made on behalf of the requesting instance for the first data upon
11 determining that the requesting instance satisfies the criterion.

1 16. The system of claim 15 further comprising:
2 a receiving module to receive a message indicating whether the first data was received.

1 17. The system of claim 15 further comprising:
2 a third providing module to provide the first data again upon request by the requesting
3 instance when the message indicates that an error occurred in receiving the first data.

1 18. The system of claim 15 wherein
2 an index file comprises the criterion and the location; and
3 the first providing module provides the index file.

1 19. A computer-readable medium comprising:
2 first providing instructions to provide
3 a criterion for identifying a set of instances of a plurality of instances of an application
4 to receive first data and
5 a location of the first data

6 in response to a first request on behalf of a requesting instance of the plurality of
7 instances of the application;
8 and
9 second providing instructions to provide the first data to the requesting instance when
10 a second request is made on behalf of the requesting instance for the first data upon
11 determining that the requesting instance satisfies the criterion.

1 20. The computer-readable medium of claim 19 further comprising:
2 receiving instructions to receive a message indicating whether the first data was received.

1 21. The computer-readable medium of claim 19 further comprising:
2 third providing instructions to provide the first data again upon request by the requesting
3 instance when the message indicates that an error occurred in receiving the first data.

1 22. The computer-readable medium of claim 19 wherein
2 an index file comprises the criterion and the location; and
3 the first providing instructions provide the index file.

1 23. A computer system comprising:
2 a processor for executing instructions; and
3 a memory for storing the instructions, wherein the instructions comprise:
4 first providing instructions to provide
5 a criterion for identifying a set of instances of a plurality of instances of an
6 application to receive first data and
7 a location of the first data
8 in response to a first request on behalf of a requesting instance of the plurality
9 of instances of the application;
10 and
11 second providing instructions to provide the first data to the requesting instance when
12 a second request is made on behalf of the requesting instance for the first data
13 upon determining that the requesting instance satisfies the criterion.

1 24. The computer system of claim 23 wherein the instructions further comprise:
2 receiving instructions to receive a message indicating whether the first data was received.

1 25. The computer system of claim 23 wherein the instructions further comprise:

2 third providing instructions to provide the first data again upon request by the requesting
3 instance when the message indicates that an error occurred in receiving the first data.

1 26. The computer system of claim 23 wherein
2 an index file comprises the criterion and the location; and
3 the first providing instructions provide the index file.

1 27. A computer readable medium for storing instructions executable by a first
2 computer system, wherein a method is performed by the first computer system in response to
3 executing the instructions, the method comprising the first computer system transmitting a
4 file to each of a plurality of second computer systems, wherein the file comprises first and
5 second data, wherein the first data is processable by each of the plurality of second computer
6 systems to determine whether it should receive data stored at a location identified by the
7 second data.

1 28. The computer readable medium of claim 27 wherein the plurality of second
2 computer systems is a subset of computer systems coupled to the first computer system.

1 29. The computer readable medium of claim 27 further comprising the first
2 computer system transmitting the data to one of plurality of second computer systems in
3 response to the first computer system receiving a request from the one of the plurality of
4 second computer systems, wherein the first computer system receives the request after
5 transmitting the file to the one of the plurality of second computer systems.

1 30. A computer readable medium for storing instructions executable by a first
2 computer system, wherein a method is performed by the first computer system in response to
3 executing the instructions, the method comprising:
4 in response to receiving a file from a second computer system, the first computer system
5 processing first data of the file to determine whether the first computer system should
6 request data stored at a location identified by second data of the file.

1 31. The computer readable medium of claim 30 wherein processing first data
2 comprises comparing the first data with third data stored in the first computer system,
3 wherein the first computer system transmits a request the data stored at the location if the first
4 computer system determines that the first data compares equally to the third data, wherein the
5 first computer system transmits the request to the second computer system.